Request for Applications (RFA): SOCIETIES EMPOWERMENT FUND

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - Consolidated List
FINAL as of January 3, 2016

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This document provides information on a variety of topics which potential Societies Empowerment Fund (SEF) grant applicants should be aware of.   These Frequently Asked Questions arose during solicitation workshops held across the Kingdom in December 2015. Written requests for clarification were accepted via email until December 30th 2015 and consolidated questions and answers are being posted on the USAID CIS website (www.cisjordan.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CISJordan). Phone calls to USAID CIS staff and visits to the USAID CIS office were not permitted and may be regarded as grounds for disqualification.

Answers to frequently asked questions are organized by major topic. Applicants are encouraged to review the USAID CIS Grants Manual as details on similar topics can be found there (http://cisjordan.org/GrantOpportunities.aspx).
- Application-Related Questions
- Project-Related Questions
- Budget-Related Questions
- Cost-Share Related Questions
- Award-Related Questions
- Other

A) *Application-Related Questions*

A.1. Q: Can an organization apply for an SEF grant if it has been founded for two and a half years and not three.
A. Applicants must be registered non-profit legal entities in Jordan and registered for a minimum of three years by the time they apply for the grant.

A. 2. Q: Can an organization apply for the grant through a partnership, alliance or any form of cooperation with another not for profit NGO that fits the criteria and under what conditions?
A: As this grant focuses on the capacity development of individual organizations, applications should come from individual organizations only. Applicants are encouraged to partner with other organizations under Phase II of the project once defined.

A. 3. Q: The organization currently employs only two full time staff members, and may hire a third person upon approval of a project proposal that will be implemented in 2016. Is the organization eligible to apply for the SEF grant? Does volunteers count as employees in the organizations if volunteering full-time? Can we count part time employees?
A. Applicants must have at least 3 full-time staff and no more than 20 full-time staff by the time of applying for the grant. The number of employees should not include volunteers and/or part time staff.

A.4. Q: Can workers working on income generating projects for the organization be considered as staff (ex. Bakery workers)?
A: Yes they are considered staff.

A.5. Q: We are registered as a cooperative, can we apply for this grant?
A. Cooperatives are for profit organizations, and therefore are not eligible to apply for this grant.

A.6. Q: Can trade unions or specific industry syndicates apply for this grant? Can two trade unions apply together to this grant?
A. Any organization that provides a proof of registration as a non-profit legal entity in Jordan is eligible to apply to this grant. Please see Question 2 above on partnerships.

A.7. Q: The only eligibility criteria that the organization does not comply with is being a 'current or past recipients of US Government (USG) funding (direct or through a grant from a USAID implementing partners and/or other USG donors) since 2005', can we still apply for the grant?
A. Applicants must meet _all_ of the eligibility requirements outlined in A.3. Eligibility – page 5.

A.8. Q: Is an organization that has received an in-kind grant from a United States Government funding, eligible for the grant?
A. No. A prior or current in-kind grant from United States Government funding does not qualify an organization to apply for this grant.

A.9. Q: With reference to Attachment VII: Donor Reference Template, if the USG support was provided through a project that has closed out where can the applicant get the Reference Letter from?
A: If former USG funding was through a project that has since closed out, the applicant should provide evidence that the grant project was completed successfully. USAID CIS will consider a copy of the official grant close out letter issued by that donor and/or a reference letter from the former project employee responsible for managing their grant with up to date contact information. If neither is possible, the applicant must provide a clear justification for not submitting a Reference Letter that will then be assessed by the GEC as part of the eligibility criteria.

A.10. Q: With reference to Attachment VII: Donor Reference Template, if the only United States Government funding was through FHI 360, should the applicant request a reference letter from FHI 360?
A. If the only funding received was through FHI 360, the applicant must state this clearly, referring to the specific grant title, dates, and contact employees following up on the grant. FHI360 will then undertake an internal reference check on the applicant instead of receiving the reference letter.

A.11. Q: How can I apply for a Grant?
A: The first step is to read in detail the Request for Applications (RFA) and the application materials (http://cisjordan.org/GrantOpportunities.aspx). Detailed application instructions are included in the RFA. Potential applicants must also read the USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program (USAID CIS) Grants Manual (http://cisjordan.org/Documents/SEF/english/Attachment%20V.%20USAID%20CIS%20Grants%20Manual.pdf) to ensure the applicant has the capacity to manage an award. All documents are available in Arabic and English.

A.12. Q: We didn't attend a solicitation workshop, can we apply?
A: Yes.

A.13. Q: Can organizations that already have grants from other USAID programs apply?
A: Yes, if the applicant has the capacity to manage multiple awards.

A.14. Q: Our organization is newly registered and doesn't have experience, however its founding members do. Will the individual's experience be considered instead of the organization's experience?
A. Applying organizations must be registered as *non-profit legal entities* in Jordan for a minimum of three years by the time they apply for the grant

A.15. Q: Will there be a geographic distribution of the grants, i.e. North, Middle, and South?
A: No. The grants will be evaluated based on the criteria listed in the APS. Eligible organizations from all governorates are encouraged to apply.

A.16. Q: Can we submit the proposal in Arabic? Can the proposal be submitted via e-mail?
A: Yes. Proposals can be submitted in either English or Arabic, although English language is preferable if the applicant has English language capacity. Electronic applications should be submitted via email to jordanusaidcis@fhi360.org only to the address specified on page 16 of the RFA.

A.17. Q: What is meant by the 'annual average budget' mentioned in the application form under the section of "organizational details"? Giving the deadline for applying some organizations will have no time to present a full audited budget for 2015, will this affect the evaluation?
A: In this section the applicant should enter their organization's average total institutional budget (operations plus programs) over the last 3 years (2013-2015)(JOD). The organization is not required to submit an audited statement by the time of the application. Only shortlisted organizations that undertake a due diligence process, through which they will be required to provide document supporting information provided in their application.

A.18. Q: Should the average annual operating budget only include USG funded projects?
A: No. It can include any sources of funding that the organization has.

B) *Project-Related Questions*

B.1. Q: We have conducted an institutional capacity assessment, developed a capacity building plan, and developed a strategic plan in the last few years, can we still apply for the grant?

A. With reference to Section A.3. Eligibility – page 5:
Organizations that have previously undertaken an institutional capacity assessment with FHI 360 (utilizing the IDA, ICAT, or other tools), or that already have a strategic plan, *are eligible* and may be considered for a 'fast-track' model under Phase I (i.e. skipping some parts of the process, if what is available deems adequate and beneficial to the change process).

B.2. Q: Can you provide a link to the material referred to in the grant application form *"Section B.1. under Resources and Technical Assistance Provided for more information on resources provided by USAID CIS"* ?

A. This statement refers to Section B.1. – 'Resources and Technical Assistance Provided' is available in Page 8 of the RFA in English. The following illustrative table provided on the same page may also demonstrate samples of resources and technical assistance provided.

Illustrative Capacity Building Topics		
Institutional Strengthening	*Technical Strengthening*	
	Cross-Cutting Themes	*Subject-Specific Technical Assistance*
Good governance	Human Rights Based Approach	As defined by the Grantee's area of specialization
Financial Management	Gender Integration	
Human Resources Management	Advocacy	
M&E	Behavior Change	
Strategic Communication	Disability Rights	

B.3. Q: Are training of trainers, development of training toolkits, and subject specific training of trainers considered an in-kind grant and as part of the subject-specific technical assistance?
Training of trainers and toolkit development are subject-specific technical assistance and can be provided as part of the standard grant.

B.4. Q: Should board member be available for the project full-time?
A: No. Board members should be able to devote enough time to be part of Phase I activities, but not on a full time basis. More information on the time commitment required for Phase I, and Phase II can be found in Table titled "SEF Roles and Responsibilities" available in the RFA under Section A.3. pages 5 and 6.

B.5. Q: If the grantee produces publications or materials under the grant project, will they have the intellectual rights to it?
A: The grantee may copyright any book, publication or other material developed under a USAID CIS funded grant provided that the grantee prominently acknowledges USAID and FHI 360 with the understanding that FHI 360 and USAID have royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable rights to reproduce, publish or otherwise use and to authorize others to use the work. In addition, the material must be available to the public free of charge. All materials produced with grant funds must adhere to USAID CIS branding requirements and display the USAID and FHI 360 logos.

B.6. Q: Can the SEF fund support empowering CBO's that the applicant is already working with?
A: No. This could potentially be proposed as part of Phase II programmatic support.

B.7. Q: Reference to Section B.3. in the Application - Question on Impact Assessment, should the applying organizations propose a project or program for the impact assessment?
A: The applying organization should propose a project, projects, or a program to be evaluated during Phase I.

B.8. Q: Reference to Section B.3. in the Application - Question on Programmatic Achievements, can the applying organization submit their annual report to support their application?
A: Yes. Although it is not a required supporting document, the annual report can potentially support your application. However, the Question on Programmatic Achievement still needs to be filled out as per the guidelines provided in the application.

C) *Budget-Related Questions*

C.1. Q: Is there a maximum grant size?
A: FHI 360 anticipates awarding up to five grants each estimated in the range of JOD 120K to be awarded in two phases per the specific evaluation criteria and competition process as outlined below. Proposals should include the budget for Phase I only.

C.2. Q: Is there a budget ceiling for Phase I?
A: There is no budget ceiling for phase I.

C.3. Q: Can the budget be submitted in English or Arabic? What format should be used for the budget?
A: Yes, the budget narrative may be in English or Arabic. However figures (numbers) must be in Roman numerals. Applicants must use the budget template provided (Attachment II) to prepare their budget.

C.4. Q: What should be included in the budget narrative?
A: The budget narrative should include a detailed description of each budgeted cost and support the figures in the budget table. For example, under the salary section, if staff member John Smith will charge 50% of his time to the budget, his name and title, gross monthly salary, percentage of salary which will be charged to the project should be included in the budget narrative; for example: "John Smith, Sr. Program Coordinator, has a gross monthly salary of 300 JOD and 50% of his time will be billed to the project: 300 JOD *50% = 150 JOD/month charged to the project." Please refer to the Budget Instructions attachment for more guidance and download our budget checklist for helpful tips. Please visit USAID CIS' website to view a sample budget http://cisjordan.org.

C.5. Q: If the organization has a policy about severance or other staff benefits, would it be an allowable cost? How should it be budgeted?
A: The benefits should be listed on separate line item in the budget template. Allowable benefits include health insurance, severance, allowances and other benefits paid by an employer on behalf of its employees or paid directly to its employees as stated in the organization's bylaws. Applicants should ensure all benefits provided to staff are included in their budget.

C.6. Q: Can we budget a percentage of our staff's salaries?
A: Yes. Claiming reimbursement on time worked should be based on actual time spent on implementing the SEF project, and should be supported by timesheets and other required documentation.

C.7. Q: Can we determine staff after receiving the grant?
A: Yes, as long as there is a budget line allocation for those specific positions with clear tasks, and the staff salary falls within the allocated budget.

C.8. Q: Is ICR (Indirect Cost Rate) allowed?
A: No. All indirect costs should be reflected as direct costs in the budget.

C.9. Q: Can we receive an advance for a grant prior to signing a grant agreement?
A: No, applicants will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred to prepare an application or prior to signing a grant agreement.

C.10 Q: Are budget modifications accepted after the start of a project?
A: Yes, a budget modification is required to transfer funds among cost categories which exceed 10% of the budget line. Budget modification requirements will be specified in individual grant agreements.

C.11. Q: Can tax charged on equipment or other costs be included in the budget?
A: Yes, if the applicant organization is not tax exempt, applicable sales tax and VAT may be included in the budget. VAT reports should be submitted to FHI 360 annually.

C.12. Q: Are all celebration, events, meals and refreshments costs unallowable?
A: Celebrations, dinners and iftars are unallowable. Events and refreshments may be funded by the project if they serve an important programmatic purpose as defined in the proposal and action plan. For example, the public launch of a series of short-films created with grant funds would be considered an allowable event expenses. Or, if a grantee is providing a training, the training participants may be offered coffee breaks during the training day. Lunch could be provided if the workshop exceeds 4 hours.

C.13. Q: How can you verify a consultant's rate?
A: Consultant rates will be verified based on rates paid through previous contracts, in addition a biographical data form or market survey for similar positions may be used.

C.14. Q: Is there a rate limit for the consultants? Is it the same for local and international ones?
A: Yes. USAID CIS will not accept consultant daily rates in excess of 182 JOD per day; each proposed position should be commensurate with experience and previous salary history. This ceiling applies to all consultants, local and international. If the established consultant rate is higher then it can be included as cost share

C.15. Q: Can we include an international consultant(s) in the project? Would their travel costs be covered by the grant?
A: Yes, international consultants may be proposed provided the applicant can demonstrate the necessity and justification for such a cost. International travel requires pre-approval and will be considered on a case by case basis.

C.16. Q: In order to set a budget do I have to send out the RFQ's , get three offers, evaluate and choose the best one according to a certain criteria and attached it to the application when apply ? Or shall I work on estimated budget according to my pervious experiences?
A: It is not necessary to submit quotes or offers with the application. All budgeted costs should be aligned with fair market prices. Applicants are required to have and follow

their own procurement procedures, therefore; quotations should be obtained at a later stage and before doing the actual procurement.

C.17. Q: Transportation costs: does it include all participants, trainers and consultants?
A: Transportation related costs should be budgeted within the transportation budget item and aligned with the action plan. Applicants should explain the number of round trips budgeted to each destination per month, the estimated number of kilometers per trip, the purpose of the trip, and who is traveling, i.e. staff, participants, consultants, etc. The maximum mileage rate that can be budgeted is 0.248 JOD/KM based on the published State Department mileage rate as of January 2014.

C.19. Q: Budgets should be submitted for the 2 phases or for Phase I only (up to 8 months)?
A: The Applicant's Cost Proposal shall include a detailed budget and budget narrative for Phase I only.

C.20. Q: Does the grant cover the salaries of government employees? If the organization is paying for a governmental staff from its own resources would it be allowable to consider it as cost share? Is it allowable to pay for a government staff if they are taking vacation time from their governmental job?
A: Any payment to government employees is unallowable. Organizations that make payments to government staff with other funding resources may not include those costs as cost share.

C.21. Q: Can funding under Phase I cover operational costs and salaries of employees?
A: Applicants should submit a budget for costs related to Phase I only. Allowable costs include: human resources (staff, consultants, etc.); operational costs (rent, transportation, etc.); and other direct costs (if any) associated with Phase I activities, including reasonable accommodation.

C.25. Q: Can Board Members be compensated for their time involvement in the first Phase of the project, or only employees?
A: No. Specific cases where board members are required to deliver technical interventions outside of their role as board members may be considered on a case by case basis.

C.26. Q: Should Phase I budget include costs for the strategic planning process?
A: The facilitator for the strategic planning process will be provided as an in-kind grant by USAID CIS. Other related costs, such as venue rental if needed, refreshments, etc. could be part of the budget, or provided as a cost share.

C.27. Q: Does the in-kind support provided by the USAID CIS cover consultancy on the development of organization structure, staff skill set, evaluation, job description development of communication and branding strategies, and institutionalization of advocacy dynamics. Please provide us with a list of the consultancy the CIS team can provide? Or should we simply look into external consultancy options for all items that require it?

A: In-kind support provided in Phase I through trainings and mentoring on the following topics and as demonstrated in the table provided in Page 8 of the RFA. Organizational

structure, job descriptions, communication strategies, and advocacy can be supported through this in-kind grant. If the organizations is interested in a more specialized branding strategies, it can allocate a reasonable amount for its development in Phase I or Phase II.

Illustrative Capacity Building Topics		
Institutional Strengthening	*Technical Strengthening*	
	Cross-Cutting Themes	*Subject-Specific Technical Assistance*
Good governance	Human Rights Based Approach	As defined by the Grantee's area of specialization
Financial Management	Gender Integration	
Human Resources Management	Advocacy	
M&E	Behavior Change	
Strategic Communication	Disability Rights	

C.28. Q: Can full time staff working on other projects work on this project and be paid as over time or as a cost share?
A: No. This project does not cover any over-time payments.

D) *Cost-Share Related Questions*

D.1. Q: What is cost share?
A: Cost share (also known as matching funds) requires the grant recipient to provide a contribution of a specified amount or percentage to match USAID funds. Cost share can be funds or resources from other donors or the private sector to pay for program related activities, or payments from the grant recipient's own funds or the fair value of contributions in-kind, such as space, equipment, the value of volunteers or staff time, etc. Recipients are encouraged to actively seek ways to engage the private sector in the achievement of the objectives and goals of their grant projects and to obtain cost share from private sector sources. Cost share may not be provided with US Government funds from another grant or contract. Grant recipients are contractually obligated to contribute cost share from sources stated in the Proposal and Budget and described in the Grant Agreement.

D.2. Q: Is cost-share required?
A: Grant recipients are required to include a cost share contribution of at least fifteen (15) percent of the total budget cost from the applicant or other sources. The cost share should be calculated based on the total amount requested from USAID CIS (for example if the budget requested from USAID CIS is 70,000 JOD, a cost share of 10,500 JOD is required bringing the total project budget to 80,500 JOD). Applicants are required to allocate their cost share contribution over the two Phases.

D.3. Q: If my organization expects to receive funding from a donor, can we include it as cost share?
A: Yes, if the organization has a proposal pending with another non-US Government donor, the organization may include it as a potential source of cost share for the proposed project. However, if the funding is not approved, the organization will need to identify other sources of cost share.

D.4. Q: Can the organization distribute the cost share unequally between different parts of the project budget lines?

A: Yes. The RFA requires grantees to contribute a total of 15% cost share regardless of how the cost share is allocated across different budget line items (membership fees, other products and services, in-kind contributions from volunteers, etc.).

D.5. Q: Can organizations equipment be included as a cost share?

A: No.

D.6. Q: Can all the cost share contribution be included in the budget for phase II only?

A: Cost share should be distributed on Phase I and II.

E) *Award-Related Questions*

E.1. Q: What does the due diligence process include?

A: Once Applicants have been short-listed by the Grant Evaluation Committee and before signing grant agreements, the final short-listed applicants will be asked to submit full supporting documentation to illustrate that the organization has the technical capacity to implement the grant, as well as the financial and administrative systems in place to adequately account for the grant funds as detailed in the USAID CIS Grants Manual. Short-listed organizations will be required to complete a financial pre-award assessment and site visits may be conducted by USAID CIS staff to evaluate the organization in these areas.

E.2. Q: Do we need approval for any foreign funding the organization receives?

A: USAID CIS does not require grantees to provide evidence of foreign funding approval.

E.3. Q: Does the USAID CIS require specific reports?

A: Yes, grant recipients are expected to submit quarterly and final narrative reports, as well as monitoring and evaluation reports, in addition to financial reports and any other required reporting stated in the grant agreement.

E.5. Q: What happens if the grantee fails to submit the required reports or deliverables?

A: No payments will be issued until the required reports or deliverables stated in the grant agreement are submitted and approved by USAID CIS.

E.6. Q: How do we get a DUNS for our organization? Must it be available before applying for a grant?

A: Organizations that are short-listed for a USAID-funded grant equivalent to JOD 17,700 ($25,000) or more are required to obtain a DUNS before the grant award will be issued. FHI 360 will provide instructions and assistance to short-listed organizations to obtain a DUNS, as required. A DUNS can be requested at: http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform

F) *Other:*

F.1. Q: What is the relationship between USAID and FHI 360?

A: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the donor funding the USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program (USAID CIS) which aims at cultivating a strong and vibrant civil society in Jordan through supporting a broad range of civic initiatives. Working at both national and local levels, it supports civic initiatives and

advocacy responding to common interests, strengthens the organizational capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and promotes Government of Jordan-civil society collaboration efforts to address reform and development challenges. USAID CIS is a five-year project (2013-18) implemented by FHI 360, a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions.

The contents of this document are the responsibility of FHI 360 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

REMINDER: Applications are due by January 27, 2016 12:00 PM Jordan time to <u>*jordanusaidcis@fhi360.org*</u>*. No further request for clarification will receive a response.*